

Message Text

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64

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9945

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ECON, ELAB, CI

SUBJECT: UNEMPLOYMENT IN CHILE

REF: SANTIAGO 4903

1. UNIVERSITY OF CHILE HAS PUBLISHED STUDY WHICH SHOWS
UNEMPLOYMENT IN SANTIAGO AREA OF 10.3 PERCENT IN JUNE 1974
COMPARED TO 7.0 PERCENT IN DECEMBER 1973.

2. ARTICLE IN EL MERCURIO POINTS OUT THAT A) UNEMPLOYMENT
STATISTICS DURING ALLENDE WERE ARTIFICIALLY LOW SINCE THOSE
WORKING IN UNPRODUCTIVE AND ILLICIT ACTIVITIES WERE COUNTED
AS EMPLOYED; B) PRESENT RATE UNEMPLOYMENT NOT BAD BY
HISTORICAL CHILEAN OR LATIN AMERICAN STANDARDS; C) STATISTICAL
BASE OF GREATER SANTIAGO PERHAPS NOT GOOD REFLECTION OF
TOTAL COUNTRY; AND D) STATISTICAL DISCREPANCY RENDERS DIFFICULT
TO SAY EMPLOYMENT SIGNIFICANTLY GREATER TODAY THAN AT END
OF 1970.

3. COMMENT: FEW OF THESE PEOPLE WILL BE ELIGIBLE
FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS REPORTED REFTEL. HOWEVER,
PUBLICATION OF 12-3 PERCENT FIGURE, EVEN WITH EXPLANATIONS
OF WHY NUMBER MAY NOT BE SIGNIFICANT, COULD BE IMPORTANT.
MANY IN GOC, INCLUDING CIVILIAN ECONOMIC TEAM, HAD UNTIL
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RECENTLY SAID STATISTICS SHOWED PROBLEM WAS NOT LARGE ENOUGH TO

MERIT SPECIAL MEASURES. THEY MAY NOW REALIZE THAT
UNEMPLOYMENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE (EVEN ON OPTIMISTIC
ASSUMPTION IT GETS NO LARGER) WILL TAKE YEARS TO ABSORB
INTO EXPANDING PRIVATE SECTOR. THAT PERHAPS EXPLAINS WHY
GOC IS NOW TRYING TO STRUCTURE 1975 PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM
TO MAXIMIZE EMPLOYMENT DESPITE ITS DESIRE TO REDUCE
NUMBER OF PUBLIC WORKERS AND SIZE OF BUDGET DEFICIT.
POPPER

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